The rogue state of Israel and the genocide of Palestinians

A Palestinian woman mourns as she holds the body of a relative killed in an Israeli strike at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital, also known as the Baptist Hospital, Gaza City, Palestine, Nov. 27, 2024. (AFP Photo)

BY HACI MEHMET BOYRAZ NOV 29, 2024 12:05 AM

Israel fulfills the definition of a rogue state by disregarding the basic norms of international law, the decisions of international organizations and its history of mass killings

The genocide and occupation campaign that Israel launched in Gaza on Oct. 7, 2023, continues unabated. Such huge material and human destruction have occurred in the region that even quantitative data cannot describe this devastation. As of the current situation, the fact that the international system and its main actors unfortunately protect the powerful, not the right, has once again come to light. As Israel is aware of this reality, it has been acting like a "rogue state" since the day it was founded.

But what is a rogue state? The term describes states that do not recognize rules and whose actions are unpredictable regarding their foreign policy. For example, they disregard international agreements, violate decisions made by international organizations, harm the sovereign rights of other states, violate human rights and even use prohibited weapons against civilians. Therefore, they pose a threat to global peace, security and stability.

It is known that the concept of a rogue state was first used for Nazi Germany. Later, this concept came to the agenda again in the late 1980s, when the Soviet Union began to collapse, and the U.S. was looking for "new threats" to continue its liberal hegemony. During this period, U.S. President Bill Clinton referred to authoritarian countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Libya and Syria, which were against the national interests of the U.S., as rogue states to demonize them in the eyes of the international community.

In the following period, concepts such as "outlaw states" and "states of concern" were also used instead of rogue states. Nevertheless, each of these served the global perception operations carried out by the U.S. to put pressure on countries it saw as a threat to its national security and interests. For example, before the U.S. intervened in the First Gulf War in 1991, it spread the "rogue state Iraq" discourse to legitimize the international coalition it planned to establish against the Saddam regime.

When we look at the states that the U.S. has defined as rogue states in the past, we see that they have some common characteristics. These can be summarized as aggression in foreign policy, non-compliance with international legal norms, ignoring international organization decisions, using banned weapons, contributing to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, violating human rights and supporting terrorism. Each of these criteria mentioned above is of course the product of the subjective value judgments and national interest concerns of the U.S., which places itself at the center of the

world. For this reason, when defining a state as a rogue, American governments have based their decisions on whether the state in question acts in accordance with American interests before the criteria listed above. Indeed, many past and current examples show that some states, especially in the Middle East, have not been defined as rogue states by Washington because they serve American interests despite having all or most of these criteria.

A Palestinian inspects the damage at the site of an Israeli airstrike in the Nuseirat camp in central Gaza, Palestine, Nov. 27, 2024. (AFP Photo)

Why Israel is a rogue state?

In a statement he made in October 2020, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan critically applied the criteria that the U.S. uses to define rogue states to Israel, describing Israel as a rogue state that oppresses its own citizens and disrupts the stability of the world. As expected, his statement was met with a reaction by Israel and its supporters. However, the bloody attacks carried out on Palestine, Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen after Oct. 7, 2023 show that Israel is undoubtedly a rogue state. In fact, according to the data of the U.S.-based civil society organization Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), Israel has carried out more than 23,000 attacks on Gaza, Lebanon and Syria alone between Oct. 7, 2023, and Oct. 6, 2024. For this reason, Israel is a rogue state that is unpredictable and can attack anyone at any time.

Israel also reinforces its identity as a rogue state by disregarding the basic norms of international law and the decisions of international organizations. For example, the United Nations Security Council, with its Resolution No. 242 adopted on Nov. 22, 1967, demanded that Israel withdraw from the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza and the Golan Heights, which it occupied after the 1967 Six-Day War. Israel, on the other hand, continues to disregard the decision and tries to completely annex Gaza, and does not sit at the negotiation table with its counterparts.

Israel also has a serious record of **human rights violations**. It should be noted here that Israel takes all kinds of illegitimate steps to intimidate Palestinians because it has adopted racist Zionism as its state ideology. It occupies Palestinian lands, builds illegal settlements, forces Palestinians to migrate and seizes their property and gives it to Jews. In fact, the International Criminal Court (ICC) ruled in a decision it made in July 2024 that the settlements Israel built on Palestinian lands were illegal and that Israel committed the crime of systematic discrimination against communities living in these areas. Therefore, there is no difference between the Zionist racist regime in Israel and the racist apartheid regime that once dominated South Africa.

The 1949 Geneva Convention stipulates humanitarian measures to protect civilians living in war zones and under occupation. Despite this, Israel has violated many articles of the Hague Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute, which are the fundamental sources of human rights and the law of war because it has hit ambulances and hospitals, bombed schools and religious sites, targeted civilian infrastructure, and blocked humanitarian aid from entering Gaza. Furthermore, former Mossad Director Yossi Cohen overstepped his bounds by threatening the then-Attorney General Fatou Bensouda upon instructions from his government during the investigation launched at the ICC in 2021 on the grounds that Israel

committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Palestinian territories.

Mass destruction, killings

According to data published by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on Nov. 19, 2024, a total of 44,000 Palestinians, including 24,000 children, women and the elderly, lost their lives due to Israel's attacks after Oct. 7. Also, 104,000 Palestinians were injured, and 1.9 million people were displaced in Gaza. In addition, as of Nov. 23, 2024, 189 journalists lost their lives because of Israel's bloody attacks on Gaza. According to figures announced by the U.N. Refugee Agency on Nov. 22, 2024, because of Israel's attacks, more than 3,500 Lebanese people lost their lives, 15,000 people were injured and 1.3 million people displaced in the last two months. All this data shows that Israel is openly carrying out state terrorism by acting with a genocidal intent.

Regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, according to Statista's data as of January 2024, Israel is the eighth largest nuclear power in the world with 90 nuclear warheads. These weapons, which Israel developed and/or acquired with the claim of self-defense and deterrence against neighboring countries, cause the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region and keep security dilemmas alive. However, Israel, which does not participate in transparency and control mechanisms regarding nuclear weapons, attacks its rivals such as Iran by following an offensive strategy to remain the only "legitimate" state in the region with this power.

Another important issue is that Israel uses prohibited weapons against civilians. For example, according to reports published by the U.N., Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, Israel used white phosphorus artillery shells, which constitutes a crime according to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons, in its operations in Gaza and Lebanon. Considering all the issues explained above, the ICC ruled on Nov. 21, 2024,

to arrest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yaov Gallant, who caused the war and crimes against humanity in Gaza. This decision alone confirms that Israel is a rogue state. Yet, Israel cannot be fully punished for its banditry because it has the unwavering support of the U.S., the leading power in the international system.

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